

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-26.

27. (Original) A frame assembly for a partition system, said assembly comprising:

(A) at least one partition panel;

(B) at least one fabric covering said partition panel; and

(C) at least one frame component that automatically and evenly tensions said fabric about said partition panel, said frame component comprising;

(i) a support element defining at least one cavity, said cavity receiving and supporting at least a portion of said partition panel,

(ii) a lockable element supporting at least a portion of said fabric, said lockable element extending from said support element and being moveable relative to said support element, and

(iii) an integral hinge portion defined between said support element and said lockable element of said frame component, said integral hinge portion enabling said movement of said lockable element relative to said support element such that said fabric supported on said lockable element is automatically and evenly tensioned about said partition panel upon said movement of said lockable element.

28. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 27 wherein said at least one partition panel is further defined as a first partition panel and a second partition panel.

29. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 28 wherein said at least one cavity defined by said support element of said frame component is further defined as a first cavity and a second cavity, said first cavity receiving and supporting at least a portion of said first partition panel

and said second cavity receiving and supporting at least a portion of said second partition panel.

30. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 29 wherein said support element of said frame component comprises a first segment and a second segment extending transversely from said first segment to define said first cavity that receives and supports said first partition panel.

31. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 30 wherein said support element of said frame component further comprises a third segment extending transversely from said second segment, and a fourth segment extending transversely from said third segment to define said second cavity that receives and supports said second partition panel.

32. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 27 wherein said frame component further comprises a flexible backing strip spanning said support element and said lockable element of said frame component to protect said fabric from said integral hinge portion as said lockable element moves to tension said fabric about said partition panel.

33. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 27 wherein said frame component is unitary.

34. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 27 wherein said frame component further comprises an engagement lip extending integrally from said support element and away from said lockable element, said engagement lip engaging said lockable element upon said movement to retain said lockable element in a tensioned configuration such that said fabric is permanently tensioned about said partition panel.

35. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 27 wherein said at least one frame component is further defined as a plurality of frame components.

36. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 35 further comprising a plurality of corner locks engaging said frame components to interconnect said frame components and establish a rectangular-shaped frame assembly.

37. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 36 wherein said corner locks engage said support elements of said frame components to interconnect said frame components and establish said rectangular-shaped frame assembly.

38. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 36 wherein said plurality of frame components is further defined as first, second, third, and fourth frame components.

39. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 38 wherein said plurality of corner locks is further defined as first, second, third, and fourth corner locks wherein;

said first corner lock engages said support elements of said first and second frame components,

said second corner lock engages said support elements of said second and third frame components,

said third corner lock engages said support elements of said third and fourth frame components, and

said fourth corner lock engages said support elements of said fourth and first frame components,

to interconnect said frame components and establish said rectangular-shaped frame assembly.

40. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 35 further comprising a backing

plate mounted to said support elements of said frame components, said backing plate spanning across said partition panel to reinforce said partition panel and improve rigidity in said frame assembly.

41. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 27 wherein said frame component further comprises an adhesive disposed on said lockable element to retain said portion of said fabric on said lockable element.

42. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 27 wherein said frame component further comprises a plurality of fastening stems extending from said lockable element and through said fabric to retain said portion of said fabric on said lockable element.

43. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 42 wherein said frame component further comprises dome-shaped head portions disposed on said fastening stems and extending through said fabric to retain said portion of said fabric on said lockable element.

44. (Original) A frame assembly for a partition system wherein said frame assembly automatically and evenly tensions a fabric about a partition panel, said assembly comprising:

(A) a plurality of frame components for automatically and evenly tensioning the fabric about the partition panel, each of said frame components comprising;

(i) a support element defining at least one cavity adapted to receive and support at least a portion of the partition panel,

(ii) a lockable element adapted to support at least a portion of the fabric, said lockable element extending from said support element and being moveable relative to said support element, and

(iii) an integral hinge portion defined between said support element and said lockable element, said integral hinge portion enabling said movement of said lockable element relative to said support element such that the fabric supported on said lockable element is automatically and evenly tensioned about the partition panel upon said movement of said lockable element; and

(B) a plurality of corner locks engaging said frame components to interconnect said frame components and establish a rectangular-shaped frame assembly; and

(C) a backing plate mounted to said support elements of said frame components wherein said backing plate is adapted to span across the partition panel to reinforce the partition panel and improve rigidity in said frame assembly.

45. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 44 wherein said at least one cavity defined by said support element of each of said frame components is further defined as a first cavity adapted to receive and support a first partition panel, and a second cavity adapted to receive and

support a second partition panel.

46. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 45 wherein said support element of each of said frame components comprises a first segment and a second segment extending transversely from said first segment to define said first cavity that is adapted to receive and support the first partition panel.

47. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 46 wherein said support element of each of said frame components further comprises a third segment extending transversely from said second segment, and a fourth segment extending transversely from said third segment to define said second cavity that is adapted to receive and support the second partition panel.

48. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 44 wherein each of said frame components further comprises a flexible backing strip spanning said support element and said lockable element to protect the fabric from said integral hinge portion as said lockable element moves to tension the fabric about the partition panel.

49. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 44 wherein said frame components are unitary.

50. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 44 wherein each of said frame components further comprises an engagement lip extending integrally from said support element and away from said lockable element, said engagement lip engaging said lockable element upon said movement to retain said lockable element in a tensioned configuration such that the fabric is permanently tensions about the partition panel.

51. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 44 wherein said corner locks engage said support elements of said frame components to interconnect said frame components and

establish said rectangular-shaped frame assembly.

52. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 33 wherein said plurality of frame components is further defined as first, second, third, and fourth frame components.

53. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 52 wherein said plurality of corner locks is further defined as first, second, third, and fourth corner locks wherein;

said first corner lock engages said support elements of said first and second frame components,

said second corner lock engages said support elements of said second and third frame components,

said third corner lock engages said support elements of said third and fourth frame components, and

said fourth corner lock engages said support elements of said fourth and first frame components,

to interconnect said frame components and establish said rectangular-shaped frame assembly.

54. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 44 wherein each of said frame components further comprises an adhesive disposed on said lockable element wherein said adhesive is adapted to retain the portion of the fabric on said lockable element.

55. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 44 wherein each of said frame components further comprises a plurality of fastening stems extending from said lockable element wherein said fastening stems are adapted to extend through the fabric to retain the portion of the fabric on said lockable element.

56. (Original) A frame assembly as set forth in claim 55 wherein each of said frame components further comprises dome-shaped head portions disposed on said fastening stems wherein said dome-shaped head portions are adapted to extend through the fabric to retain the portion of the fabric on said lockable element.